United Nations A/58/755–S/2004/277

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
2 April 2004

Original: English

General Assembly
Fifty-eighth session
Agenda items 28 and 40 (f)

The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan

Security Council
Fifty-ninth year

Letter dated 16 December 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Liechtenstein to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit the report of an international meeting of experts on the theme of "Building security and state in Afghanistan — a critical assessment", held at the Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University, from 17 to 19 October 2003, organized by the Liechtenstein Institute for Self-Determination (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 28 and 40 (f), and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Christian **Wenaweser**
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Annex to the letter dated 16 December 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Liechtenstein to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Special seminar of the Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination at Princeton University

Building security and state in Afghanistan — a critical assessment

Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University, 17-19 October 2003

Chair's summary

Introduction

A conference on "Building Security and the State in Afghanistan – A Critical Assessment" was held at the Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University, on October 17- 19, 2003. At this conference, leading experts on Afghanistan and Afghan government officials presented their assessment of the current status of state-building and pressing security concerns in Afghanistan and the region (makes more sense to me like this). The meeting strictly followed Chatham House rules and statements in this summary are therefore not attributable to individual conference participants.

Summary

Participants agreed that in Afghanistan the needs for establishing security and building of state and society are urgent, closely interconnected, and that solutions have to be holistic. Underscoring the intertwined nature of security- and state-building, participants urged delivery of immediate and effective international financial assistance to both security and state-building endeavors. In particular, participants called on the international community to deliver the promised assistance and to devote greater resources now to building Afghanistan's policing and military capacity in order to be able to meet the needs for fair and free elections in June 2004, such as voter registration and civil education campaigns. Also, the seminar insisted that Afghanistan is a sovereign state, and the international community can only offer its assistance to Afghanistan becoming a fully viable member of the international community. It was underlined that in the end policy implementation has to be "by Afghans, for Afghans, and for Afghanistan."

The following summary outlines the major concerns of conference participants.

SECURITY

General Security

Summary: Although much has been done to improve the security and stability of Afghanistan, Afghans continue to stress security as their chief concern. Participants agreed that warlords/ regional commanders are now potentially a greater threat due to the diffusion of non-democratic power. Participants highlighted that while greater Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) activity is needed and welcomed, PRTs possess limited ability to provide security in the short term.

- *Different types of PRTs for different needs*: One size does not fit all in PRT planning, as different regions of Afghanistan present distinct needs, as seen in the German concept of PRTs. Some also pointed out that the

concept behind PRTs goes beyond the mere presence of soldiers providing security and also entails assistance to building civil society and government institutions.

- *Coordination mechanism needed among different security structures*: Several participants stressed that some coordination mechanism should be established to increase cooperation among the different security mechanisms (an expanded ISAF, DDR, and PRTs) and respective Afghan institutions. The Afghan National Security Council (NSC), which the G8 strategy recognizes as the focal point for all security sector reform activities, should provide such a mechanism.

- *Continued training of civil servants needed*: Some participants stressed that training of diplomatic personnel and civil servants must continue since it is essential to building capacity, security, and cooperation.

- *De-warlordizing regional commanders*: Some participants suggested that security forces should focus on "dewarlordizing" the warlords/regional commanders. In this process, the security forces should differentiate between warlords and power-holders with a legitimate popular power-base, and support the latter against the former.

- *Increased security concerns in southeastern Afghanistan*: Participants discussed the security situation in the southeastern areas of Afghanistan and the increased dangers faced by NGOs working in this region at length. While NGOs recognize that they are working in an insecure environment, the Afghan government and international community recognize that the work the NGOs do in these areas and the programs they deliver are essential to provide some measure of social welfare and a positive presence of the central government and international community, thereby providing hope for livelihood alternatives that do not include working with the Taliban. However, several participants stressed that security in this region is likely to further deteriorate before it can be more effectively tackled by Afghan and international forces.

Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration

Summary:

- *Reform of security institutions needed for successful DDR*: It is important to recognize the link between a successful DDR process and establishing and reforming the security institutions.

- *Reintegration most important part of DDR*: Great recognition is needed of the fact that the reintegration part of DDR is the most important, because successful disarmament and demobilization cannot be achieved in its absence. The DDR focus should therefore be on reintegration programs.

- *Reintegration should also consider providing options for regional commanders*: When not fighting, many regional commanders find their troops a burden rather than an asset. If mechanisms could be found to integrate regional commanders into the economy, then they could better provide jobs for their supporters.

- *DDR also needed for Kabul*: The DDR process also needs to focus on Kabul. The Bonn Agreements called for disarming militia groups in Kabul right away – yet this has still not taken place, with many militia groups still present in the capital, including militia groups loyal to prominent members of the current government.

Drug Production and Trafficking

Summary: Efforts to control drug trafficking need to be prioritized, as poppy production has the potential to impede the establishment of political stability in Afghanistan. Solutions to this problem lie in building a stronger

Afghan state and economy, addressing the international demand side, and creating a regional mechanism/apparatus to create oversight.

- *Need to create economic alternatives to poppy cultivation*: Afghanistan's opium production is a function of a poor economy in addition to demand dynamics. Creating viable economic alternatives to poppy production is an important component of eliminating drug production.

- *Establish a regional anti-narcotics coordination office*: Some participants suggested that a regional coordination office for anti-narcotic programs should be established. Current programming lacks funds to effectively combat large-scale drug trafficking.

- *Raise awareness of consequences of drug use within Afghanistan*: It is important to publicize the effect of increasing drug use on Afghans and use this understanding to build a public movement against drugs within the country.

- *Multilateral effort needed to tackle narco-mafia*: A number of participants remarked that a concerted multilateral effort is required to tackle the growing, mutually reinforcing relationship between the "narco-mafia" and existing terrorist networks. This cannot be solved by a single country - a sustained effort involving key governments is desirable.

Border Controls

Summary: Participants agreed that a mechanism to coordinate regional border control efforts among Afghanistan and its neighbors is needed. The Islamic Republic of Iran recently developed 25 border centers with well-paid counter-narcotic police to control the drug trade, which might serve as an example.

- *Increased efforts needed to resolve Afghanistan-Pakistan border issues*: While several participants pointed out that signs of increasing cooperation with Pakistan on border security are emerging, in particular through the Tripartite Commission, some felt that more needs to be done. The main concerns focus on Al-Qaida and Taliban operatives crossing the highly porous border.

Civil Service and Police Reform

Summary: It was agreed that the civil service salary structure must be reformed. A liveable salary must be paid in a timely fashion to the police and civilian administrators. Avoiding corruption, the delivery of basic services, and security hinge on appropriate incentives provided for competent administration. General reform of civil service, which has started, should be strengthened and supported by the international community. A competent civil service is fundamental to a stable and independent Afghanistan.

- *Establish a public administration academy*: Some participants suggested establishing a public administration academy to provide basic training to civil servants of all levels, particularly for fiscal administration capacity with incentives and merit-based exams.

- *Provide basic services in all districts*: The administration must provide, and be seen to provide, basic services in the districts. Basic infrastructure must be provided quickly with communications and technological support in order for the government to be able to communicate to the local levels effectively.

- *Improve revenue collection efforts*: In order to guarantee liveable and regular salaries, a consistent revenue base must be established. There is revenue available, especially in border trade, and this revenue should be secured.

- *Increase police training centers*: Police training centers in PRTs are an important development and need to be expedited. Germany is willing to provide the necessary funds immediately for provincial training centers to start. In general, more funds are needed now to accelerate training of police and civil servants. The more police officials are trained now, the quicker the Afghans can take control of policing and managing governance and administration of their country.

STATE-BUILDING

Framework of Government and Drafting the Constitution

Summary: Ethnic participation in the future framework, guaranteed by the constitution, must be diverse. A new image of Afghan politics must be fostered to emerge with significant Pashtun and non- Pashtun involvement. Some participants suggested that a proportional representation system is the best way to achieve this goal.

- *Dangers of a strong presidential system*: Several participants suggested that Afghanistan needs consociational democracy: a system with a set of institutional devices designed to ensure the sharing of power among different social groups (such as proportionality, grand coalition, mutual veto), as well as deliberative and participatory politics. They argued that a centralized presidential system does not take historical realities into account and is a recipe for long-term instability.

- *Some tensions between increasing stability and democracy*: Stability and democracy sometimes work against each other. There needs to be a clearer policy in Afghanistan and by donors that reflects the challenges that Afghans face in doing both. This tension must be reflected and provided for in the Constitution.

- *Expedite ministerial consolidation*: The planned ministerial consolidation should be expedited. There are several ministries that are performing the same functions and are operating without a clear mandate or work program. The creation of a Ministry of Economy is essential and needed immediately.

- *Develop post-Bonn agenda*: Some participants suggested that a new framework for international cooperation and government structure is needed, perhaps through another Bonn-type process. The participants recommended that the new framework have a formal process to ensure transparency, provide better information to the people, and promote consultation with the public. An international conference should be organized to develop a post-Bonn agenda for the next five years. Such planning should ensure that ISAF expansion is harmonized with the political agenda outlined in Bonn. Immediate establishment of an achievable calendar for coordinating security benchmarks with the reconstruction efforts (Bonn with Tokyo) is encouraged.

Election Process and Timetable

Summary: Concerns regarding the ramifications of postponement of any elections, need to be worked out with the Afghan government and international partners. In doing so, the risks of failure to meet election expectations and the political benchmarks set out in Bonn need to be weighed against factors of security, political developments that may prohibit a free and fair process, and the ramifications of an election that is unfair and/or does not yield the desired outcomes.

- *Ensuring that benchmarks for free and fair June 2004 elections are met*: Several participants expressed concern that the benchmarks set out in the SG report of July 2003, which need to be fulfilled so the free and fair elections can be held are in danger of not being met.

- *June elections might reinforce current power constellations*: Some participants expressed concern that the June 2004 timeline does not allow enough time to ensure diversity among political players and participation of marginalized groups such as women and certain ethnicities. The new political parties' law needs time and support to be implemented. Many Afghans currently understand political parties as synonymous with warlordism. If new political elements do not develop, the current power base will likely win, thereby reinforcing current power constellations.

- *Postponing elections might lead to public disenchantment with the process*: Other participants argued that ordinary Afghans are expecting elections, and postponement will lead to further loss of trust in the current government. In addition, these participants emphasized that the upcoming election is merely one of many future elections, and the process is expected to improve over time.

- *Enhanced public information efforts needed on the electoral process*: A more robust public information campaign is needed to increase understanding of democracy and the electoral process, as well as to emphasize that the international community is here to support the peace process.

- *Role of different security forces during elections needs clarification*: The role of various security forces during preparation and holding of elections needs to be clarified to preclude corruption in the process.

- *Urgent financing of elections preparation needed*: Adequate financing of elections preparation is also urgent. Elections are scheduled for June 2004, but the financing shortfall in programs such as voter registration is nearly 80 percent as of October 2003. If the international community is really committed to having anything close to free and fair elections in Afghanistan, they need to immediately fund these programs.

Economy

Summary: Effective reconstruction of Afghanistan requires a more coherent economic plan and a change in the business environment. A poor business climate combined with governance problems has prevented foreign investment, even by those inclined to invest.

- *Devise an economic development plan*: A comprehensive plan for economic development must be developed. Some participants suggested that a Ministry of the Economy/Commerce is needed to guide and implement this process.

- *Focus on improving business environment*: Since investment is a key component to development, some participants suggested that the government must prioritize promotion of a favorable business climate. The focus should be on better infrastructure, intellectual property security, and controls on corruption and red tape. Moreover, the government should take steps to limit government control of the economy.

- *Better utilization of private sector, also as a means for attracting diaspora*: International organizations must make better use of the private sector as a development engine. This approach could also be used to attract great participation by the Afghan diaspora.

- *Monitor possible unequal development*: Some participants cautioned that bringing in international markets could create uneven development and distribution problems, and this situation would need to be monitored carefully.

- *Strengthen psychological reconstruction*: Others argued that psychological reconstruction should be strengthened through employment for people, addressing issues of income and standard of living, and stimulating the move to labor intensive economy.

Regional Interests and the International Community

Summary: Participants agreed on the need to keep the international community's attention focused on rebuilding Afghanistan, since much remains to be done.

- *Iraq detracting from Afghanistan?* Some participants expressed concern that Iraq has become the main concern in some capitals whose active involvement in crucial and that Afghanistan is in danger of falling off the radar. However, other participants suggested that not only are the two very different cases receiving different attention, but that in fact the US experience in Iraq has brought the attention back to Afghanistan.

- *Are Afghanistan's neighbors interested in a stable Afghanistan?* While a number of participants expressed concern about the influence of Afghanistan's neighboring countries, others suggested that a stable Afghanistan is in the interest of these neighbors. Yet others pointed out that this does not mean that these governments or elements within the countries are not doing things that have destabilizing effects.